5 Conversations You Need to Have with Your Partner When You Are Expecting

A pregnancy is an exciting time, but it does mean changes for you and your partner. Having important conversations with your partner about your lifestyle and the care of your newborn can help becoming new parents go as smoothly as possible.

1) What do we need to do to know the health status of our new baby?

Although there’s no way to ensure that you will have a perfectly healthy baby, there are steps you can take to know your baby’s health status before he or she is born. You and your partner may discuss amniocentesis with your healthcare provider if you are at elevated risk of an abnormal pregnancy, such as through being pregnant over the age of 35. However, amniocentesis is an invasive procedure that itself carries an estimated 1 in 200 risk of miscarriage. You and your partner may also consider modern, noninvasive tests, such as prenatal DNA testing. These tests can identify genetic disorders such as the trisomy 21 associated with Down syndrome as early as week 10 in your pregnancy. With some prenatal tests, such as the MaterniT21 PLUS prenatal genetic test offered by Sequenom Laboratories, your healthcare provider can receive results in as few as 5 days after your blood sample is submitted to the laboratory.

2) Who is our baby’s doctor going to be?

Once you realized you were expecting, you and your partner likely selected an OB/GYN to care for your pregnancy right away. However, it’s never too early to start thinking about who will provide your baby’s medical care once he or she is born. You and your partner should select a pediatrician or family practice physician well before you go into labor, ideally at least 4 months before you are due. Generate a list of candidate health care providers and then pick from among them based on reviews, convenience, and acceptance of your insurance.

3) What lifestyle changes will we make once we’re parents?

Your pregnancy means that what was once a couple soon will be a trio. Naturally, expanding your family in this way means you and your partner can expect some changes in habits and lifestyle. You should discuss what hobbies and activities are most important to each of you, and which might be expendable to make time for your new baby and his or her needs. You and your partner can avoid many common resentments if such things are discussed and agreed upon before your baby is born.

4) Who’s doing the diapers?

A likely place for couples to come into conflict after having a baby is in working out who is responsible for certain childcare needs. It is important that you and your partner discuss your individual responsibilities before your baby is born, so each of you isn’t faced with failing to meet expectations you didn’t know existed. Try not to make assumptions along gender lines, and have an honest and frank conversation about your needs and wants surrounding child care duties.

5) Who’s going to be there when our baby is born?

It’s usually taken for granted that you and your partner will be in the delivery room together, but the two of you should discuss which family members and friends you might want in the hospital to support you. Having a list of who to call and in what order, perhaps with a “phone chain” that takes the workload off of you and your partner, can make the delivery process much less stressful.